

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 00150 132114Z
ACTION ARA-10

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R 131935Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3794

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 0150

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, HA

SUBJECT: CHRISTMAS AMNESTY OF HAITIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: STATE 005578

1. EMBASSY HAS CAREFULLY EXAMINED AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ALLEGATIONS
REFTEL IN CONNECTION WITH OUR OWN ANALYSIS OF CHRISTMAS AMNESTY.
WE HAVE CONCLUDED THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ALLEGATIONS REPRESENT
SHOTGUN ASSESSMENT AND ARE ONLY PARTIALLY BASED ON FACT.

2. THE GOH CATEGORIZED 90 OF THE 164 PRISONERS RELEASED IN
THE RECENT CHRISTMAS AMNESTY AS HAVING BEEN POLITICAL PRISONERS,
ALTHOUGH IT SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED ONLY SIX OF THE ALLEGED
GROUP BY NAME. NAME CHECKS OF EMBASSY FILES AND CONVERSATIONS
WITH VARIOUS SOURCES INCLUDING RELEASED PRISONERS, HOWEVER,
HAVE ENABLED US TO POSITIVELY IDENTIFY 44 POLITICAL PRISONERS
FROM THE COMPLETE LIST OF PERSONS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN FREED.
WE ARE CONTINUING TO CROSSCHECK THE LIST.

3. RELATIVELY FEW "BIG NAMES" CAPABLE OF POSING A SERIOUS
THREAT TO THE DUVALIER GOVERNMENT APPEAR ON THE LIST OF
RELEASED PRISONERS, INCLUDING THE EIGHT PERSONS
IMMEDIATELY DEPORTED TO FRANCE. HOWEVER, THE RELEASE OF
MOST OF THESE PROMINENT POLITICAL PRISONERS HAS BEEN
CONFIRMED. A MAJORITY OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS SO

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PAGE 02 PORT A 00150 132114Z

FAR IDENTIFIED WAS HELD IN THE NOTORIOUS FT. DIMANCHE
AND A DISCUSSION WITH ONE SUCH PRISONER REVEALED THAT INDEED
THERE WERE ONLY 30 PEOPLE RELEASED IN HIS GROUP ON 12/24/76.
THAT DOES NOT RULE OUT OTHER RELEASES OF LESS WELL KNOWN
PRISONERS -- INCLUDING PEASANTS ACCUSED OF
SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY -- DURING THE SAME TIME PERIOD BUT AS
IS APPARENT IT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO VERIFY ALL

DETAILS OF THE RELEASES.

4. REPORTS FROM RECENTLY RELEASED POLITICAL PRISONERS INDICATES THAT THE MORTALITY RATE AMONG INMATES AT FT. DIMANCHE IS ALARMINGLY HIGH. HOWEVER, OF THE PRISONERS RUMORED TO HAVE DIED OVER THE PAST YEAR, ONLY ONE APPEARS AMONG THE NAMES OF PRISONERS RELEASED 12/24/76. WE WILL CONTINUE EFFORTS TO VERIFY WHETHER THIS PRISONER DIED OR WAS IN FACT RELEASED.

5. EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO CONFIRM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S ALLEGATIONS THAT SOME OF THE PRISONERS REPORTEDLY RELEASED 12/24/76 HAD IN FACT BEEN RELEASED PREVIOUS TO THAT DATE OR HAD DIED IN PRISON. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT SUCH A SCHEME COULD BE CARRIED OUT, WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS MORE LIKELY THE GOH INFLATED THE REPORTED NUMBER OF RELEASED POLITICAL PRISONERS BY USING A VERY LOOSE DEFINITION OF THE TERM.

6. A COMPLETE LIST OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN THE CHRISTMAS AMNESTY IS BEING AIRPOUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT THIS WEEK WITH NOTATIONS OF THOSE PERSONS WE HAVE IDENTIFIED AS POLITICAL PRISONERS. DEPARTMENT WILL BE INFORMED IF WE UNCOVER ANY SIGNIFICANT NEW INFORMATION CONCERNING THE CHRISTMAS AMNESTY.

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